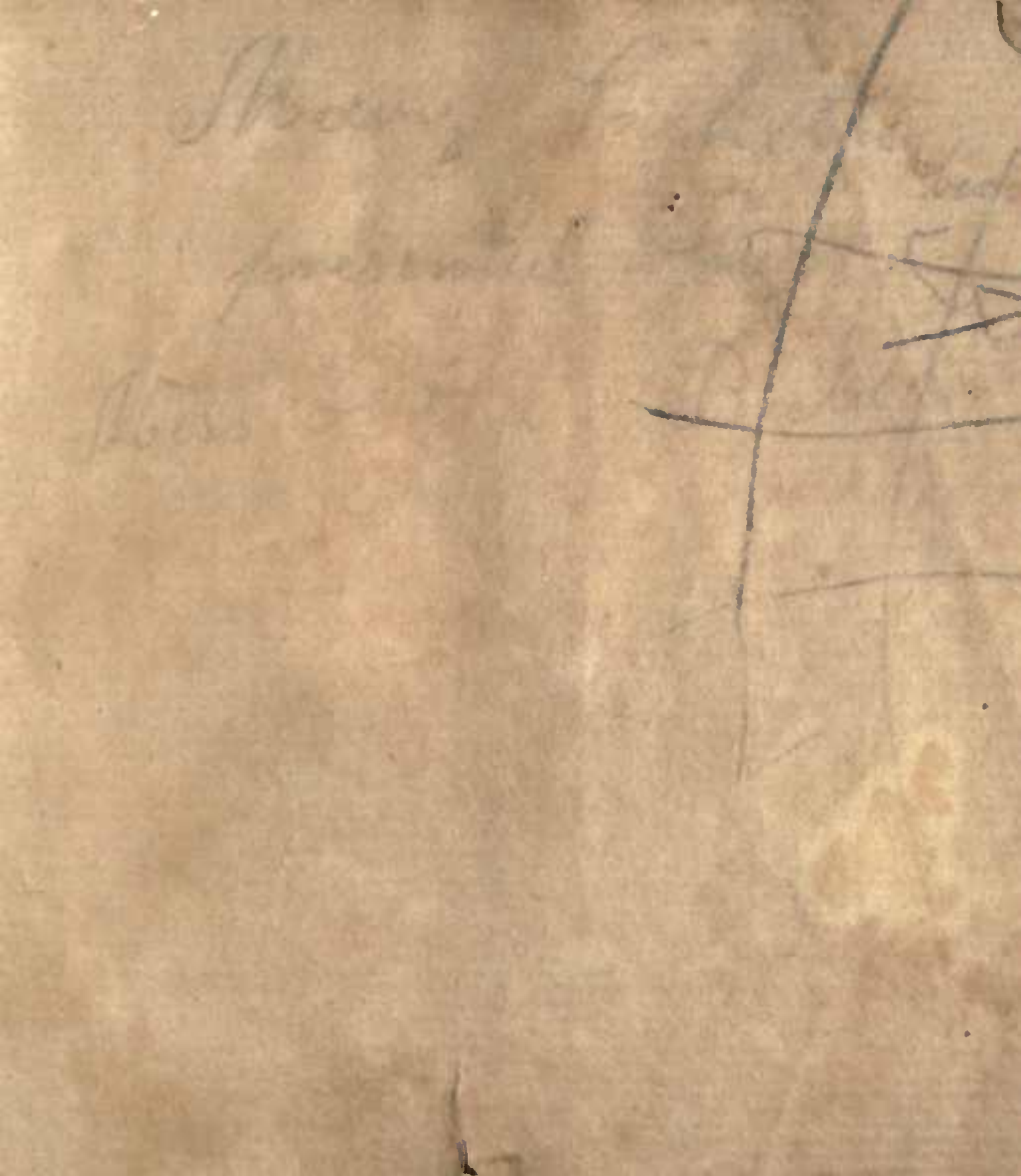

CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION

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ELVAH KARSHNER

CHOICE TALES,

FOR THE

IMPROVEMENT OF YOUTH

OF

BOTH SEXES.

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HISTORY
OF
MARIA, &c.

SOME centuries ago, and in a country at a great distance from this place, there dwelt a young lady, whose name was Maria. She

was remarkably handsome and very lovely. Youth and innocence always are so: but innocence frequently vanishes with infancy, and loveliness flies away at the same period of time. The young lady was an orphan: and a beneficent fairy, whose name was Lidoriana, undertook to conduct her education. Maria did not know that she was a fairy; but she loved Lidoriana, as a friend, and honoured her as a mother.

One day Lidoriana gave Maria permission to amuse herself with her companions in a neighbouring meadow. They were resently, as is the custom with childern, running by the side of a rivulet, which was not deep, pursuing butterflies, and gathering flowers.

When they had gathered a great quantity, they seated themselves under a shady tree, to make them into crowns, garlands, and nosegays; and while they thus amused themselves, some prattled, and others told tales. It is well known, that little girls love to prattle and relate stories, because they remember every thing they hear. But Maria less curious than talkative, sung beautiful little songs as she arranged her flowers.

The arrangement of the flowers being completed, they rose up. "What shall we do?" said one of them; "we have a great many crowns and garlands; let us play at the Maid in the Ring."

Now the Maid in the Ring was one of the sports of the little girls of that country. They were to choose the most beautiful young lady in the company, to decorate her with flowers and a crown, and then to sing and dance round her. But among so splendid a company of young ladies, it was a very delicate task to fix upon the most handsome. Many were desirous of crowning Maria, but she was too modest to suppose herself the most beautiful; and she saw that

many of her playmates were lovely: yet she felt no jealousy at the beauty of others. "My friends," said she to them, "an idea comes into my head, by which we may fix our choice. Let each of us gather a favourite flower, and place it in our hats: we will then throw our flowers into the air; and the maiden whose flower shall go highest, she shall be the beauty of the ring." This plan was highly approved by them all, and they dispersed to gather their flowers.

Among the companions of Maria, was a young lady called Charlotte, who was very mischievous and proud. She ran to a neighbouring field, and plucked a blue-bottle, which she placed in her hat, having first artfully twisted the stalk round a small pebble.

Nobody can be at a loss to guess why the little cheat did so. By this stratagem her flower was heavier, and she might throw it farther than the others could possibly throw theirs.

The other young ladies gathered without malice, the flowers they preferred. One brought a ranunculus, another a cowslip, and a third a lily of the valley. As for Ma-

ria, she went into a little wood in search of an eglantine, which was the flower she loved best. She found a bush in full bloom; but, for some reason or other, the modest Maria chose the lightest and the least she could see.

The instant their flowers were thrown up to see which would ascend the highest, a gentle gale wafted the eglantine into the air considerably above the blue-bottle, when a beautifully coloured butterfly flitted about it, and carried it away.

This circumstance highly delighted the little misses who wished the choice might fall on Maria; and they instantly crowned her, and began to adorn her as the beauty of the ring. This was an easy task, for Maria was very handsome. They had a great many flowers; and if they had not enough, there was a brook close at hand. Maria being dressed and crowned, was seated on a little throne of turf, and her

companions were amused by singing her praises and dancing round her.

The sport would have continued longer, but it was interrupted by a noise that was heard in the wood: a little old woman came out of it, and approached our little dancers. The girls were at first very much terrified, and wished to run away; but the affable air of the old woman, and the softness of her voice, gave them courage. She had a green gown, a rush hat of the same colour, ornamented with a chaplet of green leaves; her gloves also were green, and she held in her hand a green pot, in which was a little green tree.

From this verdant appearance, she was named Verdurina. "My children," said she, "I have interrupted your mirth, but I heard Maria sing of a flower that never fades: I saw her gather an eglantine in the wood; and from her choice I judge her to be worthy of the valuable present I am going to make her. My child," continued she, addressing herself to the young Maria, who heard her with aston ishment, "take this stalk, on which there are four flowers and two buds; it is the Flower that always continues in blossom; and I make you a present of it. Cultivate it with care; but know, my child, that it is not by watering it that you can preserve it. Look at this flow-

er, which is of a fine vermillion tint; it is called the Flower of Modesty. So long as your cheeks are of this lovely colour, it will retain all its lustre. The second flower is of the purest white; it is called the Flower of Virtue, and it will be soiled the moment you fail in your duty. The third is of a splendid yellow, or golden colour; it is called the Flower of Beneficence. If you are always good, it will be always beautiful. The fourth is of a fine celestial blue; it is the Flower of Gentleness. Whenever Maria loses her temper, or is angry, this charming flower will droop. This bud, which begins to open, will produce the Flower of the Mind: it will blow in propor-

tion to the knowledge you acquire, and will thus mark your improvement. The other bud contains the Flower of the Graces: it will open without your thinking of it, and will give a lustre to all the other flowers."

"Ah! Madam," cried Maria, as she took the flower from her hand, "what return can I make for so valuable a gift? I entreat you to go along with me: Lidoriana will prove to you both her gratitude and mine."

"My child," said Verdurina, "you cannot better testify your gratitude than by shewing me one day, the flower I leave you in all its freshness, I will return in three years; if it be then in bloom, both you and it will remain so to the end of your days; and the flower, even after your death, will continue to blow, speaking your praises to all the young ladies on the face of the earth."

Verdurina now approached the other damsels, and gave them also some flowers

from her enchanted tree: to one five, to another four, according to the good dispositions she found in them to cultivate her gifts.

It is currently reported, that Charlotte received only a bud from the amiable Verdurina; and that she could never make it blow. This, however, must be understood to be only the report of the young ladies of the neighbourhood; but as Charlotte had a very bad character: no one ever undertook to write an account of her life.

The fairy, for it is evident Verdurina was one, having distributed her gifts, ran into the wood and disappeared. The young ladies were all astonished at this strange and unusual circumstance; and supposing it to be an apparition, they abandoned their sports and the flowers they had gathered, to think on those which they had

received. Every one was eager to show them to her relations; and the young Maria, so soon as she returned home, placed her inestimable flower in a fine china jar, and related to Lidoriana every thing that had happened. Lidoriana appeared to be very much astonished at the adventure; but it has since been discovered, as you will presently perceive, that Lidoriana and Verdurina were one and the same fairy.

Maria went to bed very happy, but her mind was full of the objects that had occupied her during the day, and all night long she could dream of nothing but meadows, garlands, fairies, and enchanted flowers. Her first care when she awoke was to examine whether her flower had undergone any change: she ran to the jar in which she had placed it; but as she approached the window she heard a noise in the street, and saw a crowd of boys trotting and tormenting a poor woman. Their tricks and their gibes amused Maria, and made her laugh: so that it was not till they were out of sight, that she returned from the window to look at her flower. Good Heavens! how great was her surprize and grief to see the Flow-

er of Beneficence drooping, and the Flower of Modesty losing its vermillion tint. At that instant Lidoriana entered the apartment, and finding the young lady dejected, asked the reason. "Ah!" said Maria, "look at my flowers, and yet I have done nothing to occasion it."

Maria was in reality innocent; for she did not perceive that there was any harm in what had excited her laughter: but the Flower of Modesty had reason to be tarnished, and the Flower of Beneficence to droop its head, because a young lady ought never to shew an indiscreet curiosity, and still less to laugh when any person is scoffed at and ill-treated.

In this moral way did Lidoriana explain the circumstance to the young lady. Maria confessed her fault, and was so amiable, that, before the close of the day, the flowers became more beautiful than ever. This little lesson rendered Maria more attentive and circumspect, and enabled her in a man-

ner to judge how much care and assiduity it required to preserve the Ever-blooming flower. Meanwhile, after this event, it cost her but little trouble to keep the yellow flower in all its brilliance. Maria was sensible and good; and to be beneficent she had only to listen to the suggestions of her heart: but the flower of celestial blue it was more difficult to preserve. Maria was of a lively temper, and on the least anger, or most trifling impatience, the Flower of Gentleness never failed to languish, and upbraid her with her faults. Maria repaired them in the best manner she was able; for she knew that not to repair a fault, was as bad as to commit it.

As to the white flower, it is said to have always preserved its purity. It is true, that Maria saw one day a little spot upon it, but a tear which she dropped upon it totally effaced it. Nor is it known of what little weakness she had been guilty; for every body is ready to forget a fault over which they have seen the person who committed it shed tears.

The bud inclosing the Flower of the Mind grew larger every day. Whenever Maria had been docile and attentive to her lessons, she always consulted it, and commonly found that it had thrown out some new leaf. This flower was the most surprising of all, as it encreased during the whole of the young lady's life. Nothing could be more various than the form and

colour of its leaves. Upon one there were pretty little landscapes; upon another, plans of rich embroidery; upon a third, representations of history or geography; and upon many a golden lyre, or an ivory harp; in short, there were emblems of whatever could adorn the mind of a young lady.

You may well suppose that Maria, possessing so valuable a flower as one that is always in bloom, and cultivating it with such care as she did, became the most accomplished young lady of her time. The report of her amiable and excellent qualities spread through every province of her own country, and the surrounding nations spake of her in terms of the greatest appro-

bation. And you must know that there is a little fairy called Renown, who goes about the world telling every thing she knows good or bad of people, and especially of young ladies. Renown then did not fail to publish the virtues and graces of Maria, and all the nations of the earth were desirous of having for their queen a person of such exquisite accomplishments. At length, the son of the king of the Roxalans, heir to one of the largest empires in the universe, came some thousands of miles to see her, and to ask her of Lidoriana in marriage. Lidoriana gave her hearty consent to the proposal, not because he was heir to a vast empire, but because this amiable prince had

also cultivated the ever-blooming flower: for there is a flower for young men likewise which is nearly similar to the one we have described.

Maria, however, could not be persuaded to leave a place that was so dear to her, without first paying a visit to the wood where she had received the precious gift that had been the cause of all her happiness. She hoped to find Verdurina in the wood, that she might have an opportunity of thanking her before she left the country. It was precisely three years since she made her appearance. Maria then put the ever-blooming flower in her bosom, and went to the wood; but how great was her astonishment on her arrival, to find, instead of Verdurina, Lidoriana, whom she had left in her cottage. —"I am, my dear Maria," said the fairy, "the person whom you are seeking. It

was I who gave you the flower under the figure of Verdurina, and it is I who have assisted you in cultivating it under that of Lidoriana. My task is happily fulfilled. The flower will be always fresh, and Maria will be always amiable, and always beloved; for the virtue of the heart, and the graces of the mind, are charms that nothing can efface."

Maria then threw herself at the feet of her benefactress, and the fairy tenderly embraced the dear maiden. After this affectionate embrace, Lidoriana assumed an aërial form, and instantly disappeared.

Overcome with affection and grief, Maria stretched out her arms and entreated

her to return. The prince flew to her succour, consoled her, and conducted her to his empire, were they reigned over a numerous and contented people a great number of years, the admiration of surrounding princes, and an ornament to human nature.

STORY OF LITTLE JUDITH AND HER BROTHER TOM.

As they approached town, the weather growing more and more unfavorable to their plan of amusement, Miss Selwyn proposed their taking a view of Westminster Abbey, as she had never seen the interior of that magnificent structure. On their entrance they were interrupted by a little girl com-

ing up to them crying,—"Dear ladies, speak to that great boy, who is beating little Tom; indeed he has not affronted him. —He does not mind me, though I begged him to leave off, but is so cruel to keep beating of him, though he has hurt him very much." From the interference of Miss Selwyn's governess, the boy, though not without some saucy muttering, desisted, saying, he would teach the little dirty fellow how to run against him another time.

The ladies now payed some attention to the children, and inquired what their parents were.—"My father is gone for a soldier," said little Judy, "and I have five little brothers and sisters; my poor mother does not know how to keep us, so last win-

ter Tom was obliged to be bound to a chimney sweeper; and if you had but seen his poor feet all over chilblains, it would have made your hearts ache.—I am sure, I could not eat my victuals for crying."——"How old are you?" inquired Charlotte. "I am near nine, Miss—Tom is a year younger than I am."

"Well, I am pleased to see the affection you express for each other," said Charlotte, "tell me where your mother lives, and I will try to serve you; it is a pity you should be brought up in ignorance, as there are so many public schools, but I will speak to my aunt and godmother about them," continued Charlotte, addressing her companions. "And I," said Miss Selwyn, "will acquaint my mamma, and I dare say, if she finds them honest and well-disposed, she will interest herself in their favor."

The ladies, having passed a considerable time in surveying the various monuments, returned home, well pleased with their day's amusement; and as Charlotte accompanied her young friends home, in or-

der to pay her compliments to Mrs. Selwyn, she was agreeably surprized to find that her aunt and Mrs. Burton were to spend the evening there, and that she was also to remain with Miss Selwyn and Miss Rachel.

They had just finished the account of the day's excursion, when the expected visitors arrived, accompanied by Master and Miss Wilful. Charlotte and the Miss Selwyns received them with pleasure, and took every opportunity during their stay to convince them how much they were gratified with their company.

The elder ladies of the party, ever ready to promote innocent and cheerful amusement, mentioned a game of forfeits, if the

juvenile party were not too much fatigued. The children, pleased at the proposal, soon seated themselves, and commenced their diversion, in the course of which there were so many mistakes, that the forfeited trinkets presently became numerous enough for them to study various devices before they could redeem them.

When it came to Charlotte and Miss Wilful's turns to decide, they intreated to be excused, and were permitted to re-possess their trinkets on the condition of reading some little story, or piece of poetry. As Mrs. Selwyn knew that Charlotte could read remarkably well, she retired for a few minutes to her library, from whence having brought an elegant set of books, she presented them to her, desiring that she would, in return, select some part pleasing to herself, and read it to the company. Charlotte, though naturally timid, was ever ready to oblige, and, having turned over the leaves of one of the volumes for a few minutes, she chose the following—

ELEGY TO PITY.

Hail, lovely power! whose bosom heaves the sigh,
When fancy paints the scene of deep distress;
Whose tears spontaneous, crystallize the eye,
When rigid fate denies the power to bless.

Not all the sweets Arabia's gale convey,
From flow'ry meads can with that sigh compare;
Not dew drops glittering in the morning ray,
Appear so beauteous as that falling tear.

Devoid of fear the fawns around thee play,
Emblem of peace, the dove before thee flies;
No blood stained traces mark thy blameless way,
Beneath thy feet no hapless insect dies.

Come, lovely nymph, and range the mead with me,
To ſpring the partridge from the guileful foe,
From ſecret ſnares the ſtruggling bird to free,
And ſtop the hand uprais'd to give the blow.

And when the air with heat meridian glows,
And nature droops beneath the conquering gleam,
Let us, ſlow wandering where the current flows,
Save ſinking flies that float along the ſtream.

Or turn to nobler, greater taſks thy care,
To me thy ſympathetic gifts impart;
Teach me in friendſhip's griefs to bear a ſhare,
And juſtly boaſt the generous feeling heart.

Teach me to ſooth the helpleſs orphan's grief,
With timely aid the widow's woes aſſuage,
To miſery's moving cries to yield relief,
And be the ſure reſource of drooping age.

So when the genial ſpring of life ſhall fade,
And ſinking nature owns the dread decay,
Some ſoul congenial then may lend its aid,
And gild the cloſe of life's eventful day.

Charlotte, having finished her elegy, received the thanks of the whole circle, soon after which the children, who always retired early to rest, left them, Charlotte only remaining. The company then partook of a slight repast, which Mrs. Selwyn had prepared for her visitors; and Charlotte then took an opportunity to relate the history of the little chimney-sweeper and his sister, saying to Mrs. Selwyn, "I know, ma'am, Miss Selwyn and Miss Rachel are as much interested for them as I am, and mean to plead with you in their behalf to-morrow."

"My dear child," said Mrs. Selwyn, "I have already a large family of little friends, whom, if not related, yet depend on me; but, however, I will do what I can for them,

jointly with your good aunt and Mrs. Burton."

"Thank you, madam," said Charlotte, "for I know my aunt and godmother," kissing their hands, "will not refuse to assist in such an act of humanity."

In a few days the ladies placed little Tom and three of his sisters in a public school, designing, when they could read and write, to put them out to trades more reputable than that of a chimney-sweeper. Little Judith was left at home to assist her mother, as the poor woman, now her family was lessened, could earn her livelihood, for as she was very industrious, her kind benefactors not only gave her work to do at home, but often employed her at their own or their

friend's houses; they also paid for little Judith's going to a day-school, so that in a very little time she became a very good workwoman, and so very neat and tidy in her person, that Charlotte meant, with the consent of her friends, to take her into the house to wait on herself.

Miss Selwyn and Rachel were not less pleased than Charlotte when they saw the children, who now appeared so different from what they were, both in their manners and persons, they being scarcely able to recognize, as the same beings, the poor little miserable objects who, but a short time before, had moved their compassion.

RETROSPECTIONS.

ONE evening Charlotte accompanied her aunt and Mrs. Burton to Mrs. Selwyn's, and the refreshment of tea being over, the ladies drew their chairs nearer the fire, and, without appearing to do so, listened attentively to the discourse of their children, who were busied in earnest discourse.

"This day two years," said Miss Selwyn, "was a day of disasters in our house, —my brother James was at home for the holidays; Rachel and I were quite happy all the week before to think we should have him to play with us, but when he came we did nothing but quarrel, he is very good-natured too; but he had not been home an hour, before he trod, by accident, on a tame bird which I had, and was very fond of. James was sorry his carelessness had killed the poor thing, and offered to get me another, but I refused; however, we at length became friends, and began to play again: soon after this, we all went into the garden, and Rachel and I said, we would take our dolls an airing, as to James, he was to pre-

tend to be a horse, and to gallop after to frighten us: we were very well pleased with this play for some time, but at last James ran about so wildly, and with so little caution, that he threw poor Rachel and myself down, and broke both our fine large wax dolls, that we had been so careful of, and had dressed so nicely, all to pieces; we then sat down and cried, but more for the injury our dolls had sustained, than for our own hurts. My brother tried all he could to comfort us, but in vain, we called him an unlucky boy, and would not play with him all that day, so in the evening he went out to play by himself. As he was walking in the fields, his dog ran into a pond to take out a duck that was swimming there; James, fearful of its being hurt, went too near the

edge to call away the dog, and the bank giving way, my brother fell in, and would have been drowned, as he could not swim, but for a labouring man, who passing that way, took him out and brought him home. As it was some time before he recovered his senses, Rachel and I was so much frightened, that the bird and dolls were quite forgotten, and we blamed ourselves as the cause of his misfortune, because we would not play, and so caused him to ramble about in search of amusement.

"Just before my brother was brought home, my papa had been listening to our complaints about the dolls, and had given us money to buy more, and we would have gladly given this money to the poor labourer, but my papa prevented us, and has since done a great deal for him. The same night as soon as my brother was better, Rachel and I begged him to forgive our anger, which his danger had quite done away: and I think it was the happiest moment of my life, when I heard him say he should be well enough to play with us on the morrow."

"I know," said Charlotte, "that you are a family of affection, and do you know, that

I never leave you without regretting that I have neither brother nor sister."

"Why should you, dear Charlotte?" said Miss Selwyn, "I am sure we all love you like a sister."——"And I am sure I repay your affection," said Charlotte, "and will in future call your brother mine, and you and Rachel my sisters, in the same manner as I now do Master and Miss Wilful. You were speaking," continued Charlotte, "of the happiest time of your life; once I was a bad girl, and disobeyed my godmother, I went out and poor Joan followed me, I lost her, and thought she was killed, and never remember to have been so happy, as when my dear godmother lifted the latch, and en-

tered the cottage with the hen safe under her arm."

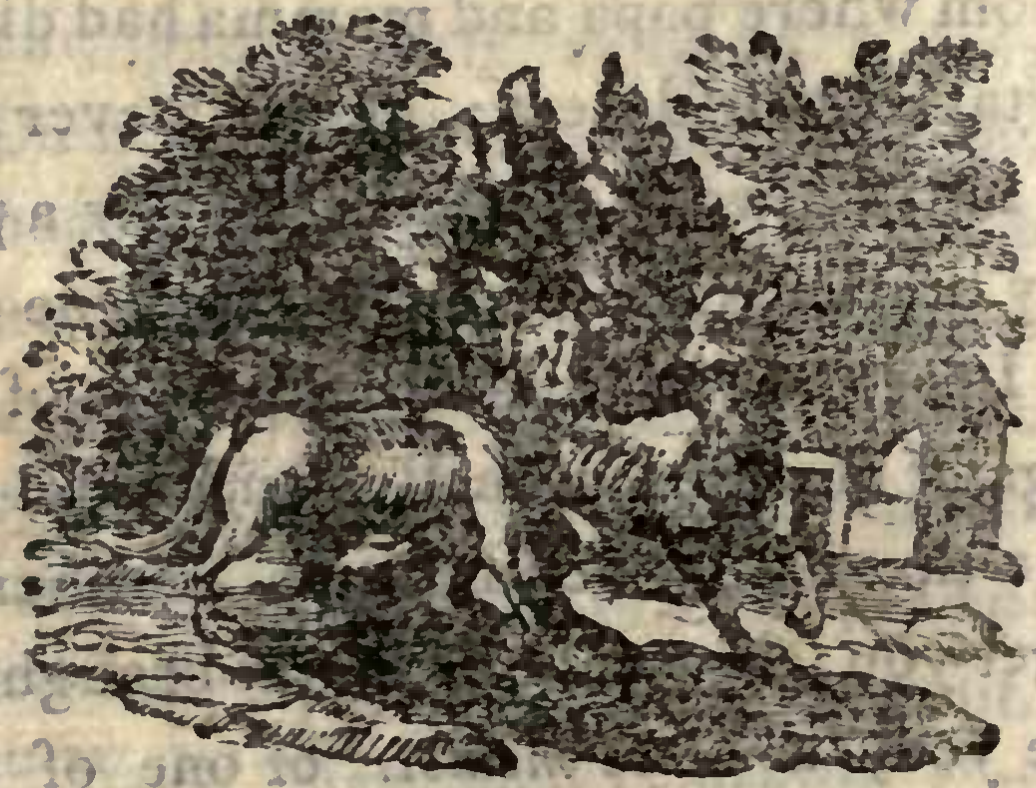
Here Charlotte gave a look towards her aunt and godmother, fearing she had said too much of former transactions. They both perfectly understood her embarrassment, and quickly relieved it by saying, "Do not fear, my dear child, you have been brought up in a cottage it is true, but you were then no less respectable than at present, your good friends here know your history, and love you better for your goodness of temper and humility, which, I trust, affluence and indulgence cannot corrupt."

"Well," continued Charlotte, "my godmother forgave my fault, and as I was determined never to repeat it, in a short time

I again became perfectly happy, and satisfied with myself."

"And now," said Rachel, "I will tell you the most pleasing period of my existence, which I date from just leaving the nursery, and being permitted to come into the room where papa and mamma had dined to partake of the desert; and whatever was given me, I always carefully laid by a part for my brother, who was absent. One day when I presented him a large packet of my savings, "my dear little Rachel," said he, "I see that I am not forgotten, neither do I forget you; in return, I have brought to amuse you, a little *memoir* of one of my schoolfellows, which, by my desire, he has written for your entertainment." This mark

of confidence in my brother pleased me greatly, and the more so when I reflected, that I was younger than himself, and yet should be thought worthy to be entrusted with his friend's history."



STORY OF MASTER WELLERS, HIS NURSE, AND HER SON.

My parents went abroad when I was very young, and as I had but very indifferent health, my mother was persuaded to leave me behind, as change of climate might ill agree with my weak state of body; my mo-

ther placed me with a good woman, who had nursed me in my infancy, and as she was very partial to me, and I to her, my parents were the better satisfied at our separation. The curate of the village was to superintend my education till their return, or until I was of an age to be sent to school.

I passed a life entirely to my liking, for my good dame Banks indulged me as much as if I had been her own child; I was near six years old, and would often bring home to play with me half a dozen rude boys, for which the neatness and cleanliness of her little dwelling was sure to suffer; and if they ventured to differ from me in play, she never failed to reprove them, by saying, "I wonder such great boys as you are not a-

shamed to plague and torment a dear little child, whose papa and mamma are absent."

In time, this mistaken kindness of my nurse made me so fretful, that I cried and complained for the most trifling cause, so that the boys in the village, or wherever I went, called me dame Banks's little baby; some would in derision offer me a few sugar-plumbs; while others would teize me into a passion, and then dare me to fight, which at length so thoroughly awakened nurse's anger, that she carried her complaints to the curate, I bearing her company in order to corroborate her testimony. The good clergyman only laughed at the poor dame's wrath, and said that it was now high time that I should exchange a nurse for a

preceptor; that, as he had promised to take charge of my education, I should now reside with him. My nurse, though very reluctantly, agreed at length to part with me, though not without stipulating, when my studies were over for the day, that I should return to her in the evening.

My new instructor soon cured me of my childish peevishness, and if at night I had any complaint to tell my nurse, as it only related to the length or difficulty of my lessons, it was what she could by no means remedy. I therefore soon read well, and the curate allowing me sufficient time to play, I began to be perfectly happy in my situation, until the good curate fell sick, and, in a short time, died.

Some days previous to his death, he told me he had written to my parents, as he thought I should be placed at school, for that having taken great pains to wean me from my nurse, if I should return again to her, there would be the same trouble over again. I sincerely regretted his loss, for his instructions were so mild, that complying with them, only appeared to be pursuing my own inclinations, instead of performing an imposed task.

At length a letter arrived from my father, and the gentleman who succeeded my late tutor, consented to take charge of me, until a school could be sought to place me in. My new governor had a son nearly my own age—he was a good-tempered boy, and we soon became great friends and companions, he was more forward in his learning than I was, which served to raise my emulation so much, that I soon, to the great pleasure of his father, became as great a proficient in learning as his son John. In summer we were up by day-break, and were suffered to amuse ourselves with planting and digging until our breakfast was ready, or it was time to begin our lessons; by this wholesome exercise my former weakly constituti-

on was soon much mended, and at length I became as robust as any lad in the village.

Though I now constantly resided in the house with Mr. Crawford, for that was the name of my new tutor, he never failed to send us every day to see good nurse Banks. One morning, while John and I were with her, she was regretting a piece of ground lying waste, which belonged to her cottage. —"It would," said she, "if properly laid out, supply a family, but gardening is so expensive, that I must content myself without peas and beans this year.

On our return home, John and I determined to beg some seed from Mr. Crawford, that the poor woman might have a crop. "And Harry," said the kind heart-

ed John, "if my father lets us have the seed, suppose we go early of a morning to dig the ground, and sow it, without telling the good dame any thing about it, it will be such a joyful surprise to her when she perceives a crop pop up as if it were by enchantment." As John's proposal afforded me much pleasure, I gave a hearty assent to his plan, and Mr. Crawford having permitted us to take what we wanted, early the next morning, without disturbing the ground more than was absolutely necessary, we deposited the seed, and determined, according to the weather, to go from time to time to water and take care of our crop.

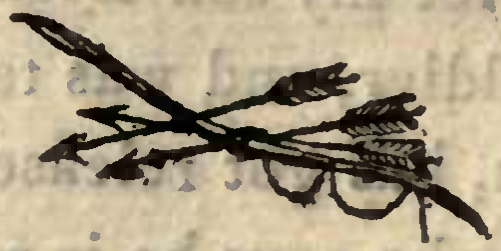
Neither of us took the least notice of what we had been doing; however, in two or three days after, she told us, that some evil-disposed person, as she thought, had been in her garden, and turned it up in several places, "but they were sadly disappointed, I dare say," added she, "but that was more my good fortune, than owing to their honesty, as there was nothing for them to steal; but indeed, I need not boast of that, for I have not had any luck since Master Harry left me, nor do I now expect any, so I shall not be disappointed."—We did all in our power to comfort her, and then left her.

In a few weeks after this, we had letters from my father, which signified that he

would soon return home, and by them I had the additional pleasure to find, that he was perfectly satisfied with my conduct and improvement, of which I understood Mr. Crawford had written him a favourable account.

My mother had not forgotten dame Banks, to whom John and I sat off with a letter and a present. The good woman had no sooner perused her letter, than she got up in a transport of joy—"There, master Harry," said she, "the ill-luck that I complained of is gone by; indeed I thought something wonderful would happen, for, *behold ye*, the last rain has brought forth a fine healthy crop of peas and beans in my garden, though none has been sown there these two years. And there is, I thank God," continued she, "a happy change in all things, for my son Dick, that left me to go for a soldier, and was taken prisoner by the French, has got released through your kind papa, who says he is sorry for his past

faults, and that he has taken him into his service. Poor lad! he must have suffered sadly since he lost sight of his duty; but since my master and mistress are coming home, and Dick is grown good, I will not grieve nor repine any more, but rejoice, and be thankful to God for all his blessings; amongst which, let me tell you, master Harry, it is not one of the least, that our parson took you from me; for I should have spoiled you, until you become as obstinate and headstrong as Dick, and all from what I foolishly thought affection."



As my nurse concluded, I could not help observing to myself, that my temper, since I left her, was much mended, and that my bodily health also encreased with my peace of mind.

I have now only to add, that the return of my parents made me quite happy, while the attention my parents bestowed on me, confirms every good resolution I had before formed. Nurse Banks is settled to her satisfaction, and her son behaves so well, that his friends have almost forgotten his past errors. I have been at school these two years, and, during that time, do not remember to have had a moment's dispute with one of my school-fellows, or even to have incurred their displeasure, but have

lived in such perfect friendship and harmony, that we have interchangeably promised to commit to paper, the principal incidents that have befallen us, for our mutual entertainment and instruction.

"My brother," said Miss Selwyn, "is so good that he never reads any amusing story or history at school, but he writes it, and gives it us, if mamma, after looking over, approves it.—And now Charlotte, as James is also to be your brother, we shall intrust our collection of stories to you, that you may not be a stranger to some of our acquaintance, when you meet them here."

Charlotte having thanked her friend, returned home, well pleased with the Selwyn family, whose amiable manners, and similar inclinations so well suited her own, that she determined in future to leave the selection of her acquaintance entirely to her aunt and godmother, prudently reflecting, that their judgment and experience, as well

as superiority of age, were as necessary to keep up her own respectability, as to make her a proper companion for girls of her own rank in life.